

For Immediate Release:

PRESS RELEASE

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For More Information:

Al Jaeger

Secretary of State

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**SECRETARY OF STATE JAEGER HOSTS STATEWIDE
ELECTION CONFERENCE AND FEDERAL ELECTION OFFICIALS**

Bismarck, N.D. – Over 100 county election officials will be in Bismarck on Wednesday and Thursday attending a statewide election conference. According to Secretary of State Al Jaeger, the election conference will focus on the preparations for the 2006 June and November elections. Also attending are officials from two federal election agencies.

Polli Brunelli, Executive Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) and Donetta Davidson, an Election Assistance Commissioner (EAC) will attend the election conference. Both are based in Washington, DC.

Brunelli's agency is responsible for assisting states and counties with efficiently transmitting election documents, such as absentee voter applications and absentee ballots, to and from military and overseas voters during federal elections.

Davidson was appointed by President Bush in 2005 to serve on the four member Election Assistance Commission created to oversee the implementation of Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). Prior to her appointment she was the Colorado Secretary of State, and has served as both the state election director for Colorado and as a county clerk.

During the two-day conference, sessions will cover election law, absentee voting procedures, assisting voters with disabilities at the polling site, and statewide voter and poll worker education efforts. In addition, those attending the conference will participate in peer training on election procedures for pre-election day, election day, election night, and for canvassing votes at the county level.

Over the past two decades most of the state's counties have been switching from hand counting ballots to centralized, automated ballot counting systems, which means the entire state has not been on the same voting system. As of 2005, six of the state's 53 counties were still counting their ballots by hand. Now, with a new voting system being implemented statewide, the state will once again be on a uniform statewide voting system, which is compliant with the mandates in the Help America Vote Act.

The election conference will be in the Capitol's House Chamber beginning at 10:00 a.m. on March 22 and will conclude by 5:00 p.m. on March 23.